



PARCC Releases Tool To Prepare Schools and Districts for Rigorous 21st Century Assessments

WASHINGTON - March 5, 2013 - The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) today announced a new [planning tool and guidance](#) ^[1] for schools and districts that will help them get ready for new, 21st century assessments in the 2014-2015 school year.

The PARCC assessments will include a rich set of performance-based tasks that address a long standing concern among educators about large scale, pencil and paper assessments - they have been unable to capture some of the most important skills that we strive to develop in students. The PARCC assessments are being carefully crafted to accomplish this important goal. They will enable teachers, schools, students and their parents to gain important insights into how well critical knowledge, skills and abilities essential for young people to thrive in college and careers are being mastered in ways that only computer-based assessments can measure.

"Students deserve assessments that measure their readiness for the real world," said Louisiana State Superintendent John White, a member of the PARCC Governing Board. "That means every school should be a technology-rich environment, not just because of tests, but because technology is an essential component of a quality education today. Our schools in Louisiana have made this a top priority, tripling the number of technology-ready districts over the last six months."

Because of PARCC's ability to better measure student performance through technology enhanced test items, they will look very different to students. The tasks on the assessments will resemble the classroom work they do during the school year and look less like a conventional fill-in-the-bubble or short-answer test. Good examples can be found by reviewing the [item prototypes](#) ^[2] on the PARCC website.

Computer delivery of PARCC will allow the test items to both measure those skills needed for life beyond high school and be interactive and engaging.

Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Deborah A. Gist, a member of the PARCC Governing Board, emphasized the importance of helping schools and districts prepare for next generation assessments over the next two years.

"As we work to transform education in Rhode Island, one of our goals has been to establish world-class standards and assessments for our schools and for our students. Today marks a major step toward that goal, as the PARCC consortium rolls out tools to help schools transition to these new assessments. I am confident that the PARCC assessments will provide our families and educators with timely and valuable information about student progress and achievement, which will help all of us move our schools toward greatness," said Gist.

Preparing for this type of assessment, one that is computer-based and aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), necessitates changes in how schools prepare. The PARCC Assessment Administration Capacity Planning Tool provides schools and districts with a calculator that supports local technology budgeting and decision-making in preparation for computer-based administration of the tests in the 2014-2015 school year. This is a tool that administrators and school leaders have requested from the consortium to help them plan for a successful test administration in two years.

PARCC is also releasing guidance ^[1] that provides schools and districts with more information about the design of the PARCC assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, as well as the number of testing sessions and the approximate time it will take students to complete the assessments.

Unlike many current state assessments, the PARCC assessments will provide information on the full range of knowledge and skills needed to be career- and college-ready or on track toward that goal. And, they will measure the skills and knowledge of students working significantly beyond or behind their grade level. These improvements from many current tests will help teachers guide instruction and give more information to students and their parents.

Other advances in the PARCC system not available with many current state tests:

- A college- and career-ready determination that two- and four-year colleges and universities in PARCC states can use to place students into entry-level, credit-bearing courses.
- Separate reading and writing scores from the English language arts/literacy assessment.
- A measure of student growth.
- Results returned within weeks of the assessment.

As the work of PARCC continues, the consortium is committed to keeping local educators and policy makers informed. The guidance released today is the first in a series of publications that PARCC intends to release over the coming months. All publications will be designed specifically to assist state and local policy makers as they prepare to administer PARCC assessments in 2014-2015.

For more information, visit <http://www.parcconline.org> [3].

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[1] <http://parcconline.org/assessment-administration-guidance>

[2] <http://parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>

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